

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

These remarks are made in response to the Office Action of June 18, 2008 (Office Action). As this response is timely filed within the 3-month shortened statutory period, no fee is believed due. However, the Examiner is expressly authorized to charge any deficiencies to Deposit Account No. 50-0951.

Specification

It was asserted that the trademark Lotus Sametime should be capitalized whenever it appears and be accompanied by the generic terminology.

Appropriate correction has been made.

Claims Rejections – 35 USC § 112

Claims 2, 15, 20, and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, because these claims contain the trademark/trade name Lotus Sametime.

Claims 2, 15, 20, and 33 have been cancelled.

Claims Rejections – 35 USC § 101

Claims 1-35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 because the claimed invention was alleged to be directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Since it was only asserted in this section that Claims 34-35 are directed to a "system" but fail to recite any hardware elements and are thus non-statutory, Applicants assume that only Claims 34-35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101.

Although Applicants disagree with the rejection, Claims 34-35 have been cancelled to facilitate prosecution of the instant application.

Claims Rejections – 35 USC § 103

Claims 1-2, 6-20, and 24-35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being anticipated by Landon, *et al.*, "Deploying Lotus Sametime on the eServer iSeries Server," Redbooks, June 2002 (hereinafter Landon) in view of U.S. Published Patent Application 2004/0064693 to Pabla, *et al.* (hereinafter Pabla). Claims 3-5 and 21-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Landon in view of Pabla, and in further view of U.S. Published Patent Application 2004/0267887 to Berger, *et al.* (hereinafter Berger).

Applicants respectfully disagree with the rejections and thus have not amended the claims. Applicants have cancelled Claims 16-35. However, Applicants are not conceding that the cancelled claims fail to present patentable subject matter. The cancellations are solely for the purpose of expediting prosecution. Accordingly, the cancellations should not be interpreted as the surrender of any subject matter, and Applicants expressly reserve the right to present the cancelled claims in any future divisional or continuation applications from the present application.

Aspects of Applicants' Invention

It may be helpful to reiterate certain aspects of Applicants' invention prior to addressing the cited references. One embodiment of the invention, as typified by amended Claim 1, is a collaborative computing method.

The method can include providing a collaborative computing system comprising at least one instant messaging client, the collaborative computing system including presence awareness features that automatically detect online entities that are logged into the collaborative computing system; and initializing the instant message client within a graphical user interface of the collaborative computing system.

The method also can include specifying at least one search limitation, the search

limitation preventing users other than users belonging to a predetermined class of users from accessing data records pertaining to one or more predetermined online entities and from receiving data indicating an online presence of one or more predetermined online entities; receiving a search initializing action from the graphical user interface; responsive to the receiving step, presenting search input fields within the graphical user interface; receiving input via the input fields that specifies a search pattern; subject to the at least one search limitation, searching at least one record source for online entities that satisfy the search pattern using the presence awareness features; and displaying a search result from the searching step within the graphical user interface.

The method further can include selecting at least one of the online entities displayed in the search result; and establishing a software-enhanced communication not limited to instant messaging between a user of the instant messaging client and the selected online entity.

See, e.g., Specification, paragraphs [0043] to [0044]; see also Fig. 5.

The Claims Define Over The Prior Art

The present invention provides, for example, a method for enhancing collaborative computing with customizable personnel searches. More specifically, the collaborative computing system used by the method can include presence awareness features that indicate which users and/or user groups are online. The presence awareness features can be implemented via an availability list somewhat analogous to the instant messaging graphical user interface (GUI) of many conventional instant messaging applications. The GUI displaying the availability list can permit a user to input a customized search pattern to locate one or more online entities, where an online entity can include a user and/or a group. A search can be performed against one or more record sources, such as a company intranet directory, a personal contact directory, and the like. A search result containing the online entities satisfying the search pattern can be responsively obtained.

Further, the search results can be displayed to the user so that the user can directly initialize any variety of software-enhanced communication between the user and an online entity included in the search results. See Specification, paragraph [0007].

Unlike most conventional collaboration software that limit communications from the instant messaging GUI to instant messaging type communications, any of a variety of software-enhanced communications that include instant messaging as well as Web conferencing, chatting, co-browsing, and the like can be initiated from the presence awareness list provided by features recited in the claims.

It was asserted in the Office Action that Landon discloses on page 9, 1.3.3, Sametime Connect client, 4th paragraph, establishing a software-enhanced communication not limited to instant messaging between a user of the instant messaging client and the selected online entity, as recited in independent Claims 1 and 12 of the instant application.

However, it is noted that page 9, 1.3.3, Sametime Connect client, fourth paragraph, of Landon reads as follows:

Both versions of the Sametime Connect client contain a presence list or buddy list that provides an entry point to all collaborative activities in Sametime. This buddy list can display the name of any user in the Sametime community that is online. From the presence list, a user can select another user's name to initiate an instant messaging session or an instant meeting with the user. Other users can be invited to join the chat or instant meeting. (Emphasis supplied.)

It can be seen from the above paragraph that Landon only discloses initiating an instant messaging/meeting between the users, not a software-enhanced communication not limited to instant messaging as in the present invention.

In one embodiment of the present invention, the search engine can prevent particular users of the collaboration application from receiving data concerning designated online entities, thereby protecting the privacy of the designated online entities. Specifically, customizable search limitations can be established for the search engine.

The search limitations can limit the users permitted to search for a specified online entity to a select group. For example, search limitations can only permit users within a designated team or division to have awareness of an online entity. Search limitations can also block the awareness of designated online entities from designated users. For example, when an online entity does not want a select user to know of his or her presence online, the online entity can establish appropriate search limitations, thereby preventing the select user from receiving data relating to the online entity. The use of search limitations can permit online entities to be selectively unlisted in regards to the collaboration application. See Specification, paragraph [0031].

It was asserted in the Office Action that Landon discloses specifying at least one search limitation (page 201, Creating a buddy list and group), the search limitation preventing users other than users belonging to a predetermined class of users from accessing data records pertaining to one or more predetermined online entities and from receiving data indicating an online presence of one or more predetermined online entities (page 6, 1.2.9, Security), as recited in independent Claims 1 and 12 of the instant application.

However, it is noted that page 201, Creating a buddy list and group, of Landon describes that the groups and the list of persons a user is creating are not relevant to Group and Person documents in the Domino Directory, which are kept exclusively from each user and cannot be seen by other users. This has nothing to do with the concept of search limitations in the sense of the present invention. It is noted that the buddy list is specific to each user. But the search is not limited to the entities on the buddy list. Rather, the search engine can use the presence awareness feature to search any entities whose online presence is not blocked. In other words, an online entity can always be searched and found if it is not unlisted using search limitations even if it is not on a user's buddy list.

Page 6, 1.2.9, Security, of Landon describes that the Access Control Lists (ACLs) of databases on the Sametime server can be used to provide users with anonymous access or basic password authentication to individual databases on the server. This also has nothing to do with the concept of search limitations in the sense of the present invention. It is noted that the search limitation feature of the present invention allows an entity to be unlisted from the presence awareness feature so that the entity cannot be found by certain user(s) even if the entity is online. This is completely different from database access control.

Pabla does not make up for the deficiencies of Landon as discussed above.

Accordingly, the cited references, alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest each and every element of Claims 1 and 12. Applicants therefore respectfully submit that Claims 1 and 12 define over the prior art. Furthermore, as each of the remaining claims depends from Claims 1 or 12 while reciting additional features, Applicants further respectfully submit that the remaining claims likewise define over the prior art.

Applicants thus respectfully request that the claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Applicants believe that this application is now in full condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. Applicants request that the Examiner call the undersigned if clarification is needed on any matter within this Amendment, or if the

Appln No. 10/715,313
Amendment dated July 30, 2008
Reply to Office Action of June 18, 2008
Docket No. BOC9-2003-0033 (402)

Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion.

Respectfully submitted,

AKERMAN SENTERFITT

Date: July 30, 2008

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